

SERVICE OF WORSHIP

Fourth Sunday in Lent • March 15, 2026 at 8:30 and 11:00 a.m.

First United Methodist Church

Baton Rouge, Louisiana



“Healing the Man Born Blind” by Annibale Carracci, Rome, c. 1605

Laetare! This Latin word, meaning rejoice, is used by many Christian traditions to name this Sunday in Lent, often characterized by a brief lifting of the heaviness of the season. What greater joy could be found than in the Gospel story of the man, blind since birth, healed by Christ and suddenly able to see the world around him? Laetare—rejoice in God!

CHIMES *At the sound of the chimes, we invite you into a period of quiet reflection preparing for today's service.*

OPENING VOLUNTARY “My Song Is Love Unknown”

Ralph Vaughan Williams

GREETING

CELEBRATION OF APPOINTMENT

Leader to congregation:

Shan Schatzle, *Staff Parish Relations Committee, Chair*

Dear friends, today we welcome Reverend Doctor Kim McGee, who has been appointed to serve as a Deacon, part time, at First United Methodist Church. We believe she is well-qualified and has been appointed by our bishop, Delores J. Williamston.

Leader to pastor:

Reverend McGee, you have been sent to live among us as bearer of the Word of God; minister of the Sacraments; and sustainer of the love, order, and discipleship of the people of God.

Pastor:

Reverend Kim McGee, *Deacon*

Today I affirm this commitment in the presence of this congregation.

Leader to congregation:

Reverend Brady Whitton, *Senior Pastor*

Brothers and sisters in Christ, as a people committed to participate in the ministries of the Church by your prayers, your presence, your gifts, your service, and your witness, will you who celebrate this new beginning, support and uphold Reverend McGee and the other clergy, Reverend Don Cottrill, Reverend Kip Shuford, and Reverend Kale Wetekamm, and myself, in these ministries?

Congregation:

We affirm our commitment to support Reverend McGee and the other clergy with our prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness.

Leader:

Eternal God, strengthen and sustain us in our ministries together. Give us patience, courage, and wisdom so to care for one another and challenge one another that together we may follow Jesus Christ, living together in love, and offering our gifts and talents in your service.

All, praying together:

Lord God, bless the ministries of your Church. We thank you for the variety of gifts you have bestowed upon us. Draw us together in one Spirit, that each of us may use our differing gifts as members of one body. May your Word be proclaimed with faithfulness, and may we be doers of your Word and not hearers only. As we who have died and risen with Christ in baptism gather at his table and then scatter into the world, may we be one in service to others, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

† HYMN 73 “O Worship the King”

OUR SHARED LIFE

The votive candle is in memory of Larry Davis.

Today’s music is given to the Glory of God and in honor of the birthday of Marilyn Sue Burgess by Dr. George Burgess and their children.

CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER

The music you are about to hear is a continuation of the prayer. You are invited to respond with a quiet spirit or a spoken “Amen.”

“The Lord’s Prayer”

Albert Malotte

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Children are invited to come forward for the children’s sermon during the singing of “Jesus Loves Me.”

HYMN “Jesus Loves Me”

Jesus loves me! This I know, for the Bible tells me so.

Little ones to him belong; they are weak, but he is strong.

Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.

CHILDREN’S SERMON

† PASSING OF THE PEACE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

An offering is collected to support the work of First United Methodist Church sharing God's love with the world. Please take a moment and record your attendance on a card located in the blue folders in the pews. Place the card in the offering plate when passed to you. Make a secure gift by scanning the QR Code or visit fumcbr.org/give to give online.



OFFERTORY "The God of Abraham Praise"

Setting by Philip Gehring

The God of Abraham praise, who reigns enthroned above; ancient of everlasting days and God of love. Jehovah, great I Am! by earth and heaven confessed; I bow and bless the sacred name forever blest. The God of Abraham praise, at whose supreme command from earth I rise and seek the joys at his right hand. I all on earth forsake, its wisdom, fame, and power and him my only portion make, my shield and tower. The God of Abraham praise, whose all-sufficient grace shall guide me all my pilgrim days in all my ways. He deigns to call me friend; he calls himself my God; and he shall save me to the end through Jesus' blood. He by himself has sworn; I on his oath depend. I shall, on eagle wings upborne, to heaven ascend. I shall behold his face; I shall his power adore and sing the wonders of his grace forevermore. The whole triumphant host give thanks to God on high. "Hail, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!" They ever cry. Hail, Abraham's God and mine! I join the heavenly lays: All might and majesty are thine and endless praise! Amen.

† DOXOLOGY **Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

† PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness, and was tempted as we are: send your Spirit to strengthen us through your holy word: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

† GOSPEL LESSON John 9:1-9, 13-25, 32-39

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. ² His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" ³ Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. ⁴ We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." ⁶ When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, ⁷ saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. ⁸ The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" ⁹ Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am he." They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. ¹⁴ Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵ Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." ¹⁶ Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath." Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. ¹⁷ So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet." ¹⁸ The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight ¹⁹ and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" ²⁰ His parents answered, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind, ²¹ but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." ²² His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. ²³ Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." ²⁴ So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner." ²⁵ He answered, "I

do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.” Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” ³⁶ He answered, “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.” ³⁷ Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.” ³⁸ He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him. ³⁹ Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see may see and those who do see may become blind.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON “Light for the Blind”

Reverend Whitton

† HYMN 378 “Amazing Grace”

† BENEDICTION

CLOSING VOLUNTARY “Trumpet Tune in B^b”

Michael McCabe

MINISTRY OF WORSHIP

Acolyte	Hannah McIlwain (8:30 a.m.); Dawton Harr (11:00 a.m.)
Children’s Sermon	Eric Lockridge
Lay Reader	Mike Steinkamp (8:30 a.m.); Peggy Wooley (11:00 a.m.)
Liturgist	Reverend Doctor Kim McGee, <i>Deacon</i> and <i>Chaplain</i> at Our Lady of the Lake Hospital
Musicians	Dr. Brandon Hendrickson, <i>Bass</i> ; Michael Hull, <i>Trumpet</i> ; The Chancel Choir (11:00 a.m.) Holden Miller, <i>Associate Director of Music and Organist</i> Lamar Drummonds, <i>Director of Music and Worship</i>
Preaching	Reverend Brady Whitton, <i>Senior Pastor</i>
Soundboard	Rebecca Mitchell

Welcome to First United Methodist Church

Families with Children – Children are always welcome in worship! Childcare is available during all services for children ages 6 weeks through Kindergarten. FUMC also offers Sunday morning groups for children and youth from 9:45-10:45 a.m. To find a group, visit the check-in table located across from the welcome desk in the Conference Center lobby.

Café 930 - Enjoy fellowship and a cup of hot coffee or tea from 8:00-11:00 a.m. (Ory Parish Hall) every Sunday morning. An assortment of teas, flavored syrups, and sweeteners are available. All are welcome.

Believe & Belong – Are you discerning becoming a member of FUMC or ready to join? Attend Believe & Belong today from 9:45–10:45 a.m. in the Conference Center. Childcare and Children’s Sunday School are available during this hour. Register by scanning the QR code. Questions? Email Pattye Hewitt, *Executive Director of Adult Education, Hospitality, and Care*, at phewitt@firstmethodist.org.



Announcements

Help adorn the sanctuary on Easter morning with fresh flowers and Easter Lilies in memory or in honor of someone special to you. By scanning the QR code to the right with your phone’s camera, you will be directed to an Easter Flower reservation page. Each plant is \$23. You can also order by visiting www.firstmethodist.org under the “Lent” tab. The deadline for ordering is Sunday, March 29.



Draw closer to God by attending a service of Holy Communion each Wednesday in Lent from 12:10-12:40 p.m. in the Aldrich Chapel.

Today we welcome Dr. Brandon Hendrickson, *Associate Professor of Voice* at the LSU School of Music. Hendrickson performs frequently throughout the United States, Malaysia, Canada, Ireland, the United Kingdom, and Italy.

Won't be with us in-person during Holy Week (Palm Sunday through Easter Sunday)? Holy Week worship kits contain everything you need to experience Holy Week while worshipping online. Kits will be available M-F 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. and on Sundays at the America Street Welcome Desk and in Ory Parish Hall.

Spots are filling up fast! Visit firstmethodistyouth.org to register for the Sr. High Mission Trip (May 23-May 31) for 8th-12th graders and the Jr. High Mystery Mission Trip (July 21-24) for 6th-8th graders. Elementary signups are at firstmethodistchildren.org with Mission Day Camp (June 15-18) for rising 4th-6th graders and Vacation Bible School (July 13-17) for rising prek-4 to 6th graders!

Ladies are invited to attend **Free to Be Women's Retreat** on March 20-22 at the Feliciana Retreat and Conference Center, led by Mary Byo, Cherri Johnson, and Cindy Mann. This weekend will center around rest, reflection, prayer, and making space for the presence of God. This is your invitation to remember that faith is meant to heal and restore the whole of who you are: body, mind, heart, and soul. For more information, email mary@nurturedbr.com and to register, visit fumcbr.org/freetobe or scan the QR code.



Senior Adult Ministry — “**Strong and Steady: Movement for Seniors**” begins March 24 and meets every Tuesday at 11:00 a.m. in Ory Parish Hall, with adaptable exercises for standing or seated participation. Certified yoga teacher and FUMC member Mary Byo will lead the class. Also coming up, the **Spring 2026 Senior Adult Luncheon** will be held April 8 at 10:30 a.m. in the FUMC Conference Center, featuring zydeco band T'Monde. Luncheon cost is \$25 per person. To register for either event or to learn more, contact Dr. Chelsey Geeting at cgeeting@firstmethodist.org or (225) 383-4777, ext. 225. Registration forms can also be found in the foyer of the Adult Building.

Current count: 2,700 eggs out of 5,000, and lots of candy and trinkets are still needed! The Children's Ministry is collecting eggs and candy for the annual Easter Walk that is on Saturday, March 28 from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. at Dan and Robin Reed's house (719 Charter Oak, 70810). Donations are needed by March 22. Go to www.firstmethodistchildren.org for opportunities to support the event. Thank you for generously supporting this FUMC tradition!

Calling Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday parking hospitality volunteers! Help welcome the many guests who will join us on these two high attendance days. Parking Hospitality Volunteers help guide people to available parking. Volunteers will be provided with safety vests and hand-held flags to help direct traffic. What could be more fun? To sign up or learn more, please contact Pattye Hewitt at phewitt@firstmethodist.org. Time Slots: 8:00–8:40 a.m.; 9:15–9:55 a.m.; 10:30–11:10 a.m.

The Music Ministry is thrilled to announce an immersive week of music, drumming, art, and recreation at the **First United Music Camp**! Camp will be June 8-11 from 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. for rising 1st-6th Graders (Fall of 2026). A \$60 registration fee includes snacks, t-shirt, and activities. Please pack a lunch. Days will include singing, drumming, Orff ensemble (xylophones and glockenspiels), movement, art, and missions: all taught by specialists in each field from the LSU School of Music and Greater Baton Rouge Community. If you have any questions or would like to volunteer, email Holden Miller, *Associate Director of Music and Organist*, at hmillers@firstmethodist.org. Invite friends and grandchildren—Space is limited to the first 50 children, so register now by going to fumcbr.org/MusicCamp or scanning the QR Code.



The Love Your Neighbor Van needs restocking! Please place your donations in the box near the America Street entrance. Visit the Love Your Neighbor Van Amazon Registry by scanning the QR code. We are currently collecting the following items: large backpacks; new or gently used T-shirts (L-XL, no white), men's crew socks; new or gently used men's elastic waist pants and shorts (L-XXL); and new or gently used men's tennis shoes (sizes 10-12).



HOLY WEEK WORSHIP SCHEDULE

With the exception of Mid City, Holy Wednesday, and Easter Sunrise, all other services will be livestreamed.

Palm Sunday—March 29

The 8:30, 9:45, and 11:00 a.m. services will proclaim Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem with the palm processional. Mid City Church will gather for dinner at 6:30 p.m. at Barracuda (2524 Government Street, 70806).

Holy Wednesday—April 1

A service of Holy Communion from 12:10-12:40 p.m. in the Aldrich Chapel.

Holy Thursday—April 2

The 7:00 p.m. service in the sanctuary will commemorate the last supper Jesus shared with his disciples before his arrest and trial. The service concludes with the stripping of the altar.

Good Friday—April 3

The 12:00 p.m. sanctuary service will commemorate the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and his death at Calvary. The evening service is an opportunity to worship with Wesley United Methodist Church (544 Government Street, 70802) at 6:30 p.m.

Easter Vigil—April 4

This gathering at 6:30 p.m. will explore the mystery of the light of Christ around a campfire. Email Katie Davis at kdavis@firstmethodist.org for the location.

Easter Sunday—April 5

The 6:30 a.m. Easter Sunrise Service at Rhorer Plaza behind City Hall (230 St. Louis Street, 70802) will be led by the youth of FUMC. Bring your family, friends, and a lawn chair.

The 8:30 and 11:00 a.m. services in the sanctuary will proclaim "Christ Is Risen!" The Chancel Choir, Festival Brass, and Organ, will provide music at both services.

The 9:45 a.m. America Street Service will include a celebration of Christ's resurrection through word and music led by the America Street Band.

There is no Sunday School or evening programming on Easter Sunday.

This April, Easter Sunday 2026, marks the centennial of the completion and dedication of the Baton Rouge First United Methodist Church sanctuary. Accounts regarding the "new" church will be shared in the bulletin over the coming weeks.

After securing Raymond Spencer as architect of the new church, the Building Committee soon went to work soliciting bids from stained glass companies from around the country. Three bids were received, and The Kansas City Stained Glass Works Co. was selected.

Along with the Building Committee's consideration of window subjects was also the matter of cost. The committee agreed on August 1, 1925, to submit payment of \$750 for each of the six balcony windows and \$1,500 for the large window located over the balcony's north side.

The Building Committee settled on what images the windows should depict, chronicling key moments in the life and ministry of Christ: "The Nativity," "Christ in the Temple," "Blessing the Little Children," "Christ in the Home of Mary and Martha," "Christ Healing the Sick," "The Great Commission," and "The Last Supper."

As the completion of the sanctuary approached, the unfortunate news was shared that the balcony pictorial stained glass windows would not arrive by the dedication of the new church. It is guessed that plywood was attached to the outer sanctuary walls, completely covering the window openings. The windows arrived in Baton Rouge, via rail from Kansas City, on August 10, 1926. On Sunday, September 5, 1926, church members beheld for the first time the beauty and magnificence of the completed stained glass windows.

"Worship at River's Edge" by Ronald Garay, Ph.D.

